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**BULLETIN  
OF THE  
CENTER FOR  
CHILDREN'S  
BOOKS**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS**



EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED  
WITH ANNOTATIONS

- \* Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
- R Recommended.
- Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
- M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
- NR Not recommended.
- SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
- SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.

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# Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO • GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

Volume 34

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Number 3

## *New Titles for Children and Young People*

Adkins, Jan. *Moving Heavy Things*; written and illus. by Jan Adkins. Houghton, 1980. 80-464. ISBN 0-395-29206-9. 47p. \$6.95.

Ad  
6-9

Adkins' line drawings are precise and explicit in detail, if not always adequately captioned. He writes in a casual, conversational style that is often humorous, and he gives a considerable amount of information about sensible use of muscular strength, the advantages of planning and patience, and the various problems and solutions in moving heavy objects. The latter range from such simple devices as backpacks and porter's knots (for carrying bulky loads on the head) to block-and-tackles, winches, jacks, levers, etc. Unfortunately the usefulness of this book is diminished by the fact that it has neither a table of contents nor an index.

Aksyonov, Andrei. *Exploring the Deep*; by Andrei Aksyonov and Alexander Chernov. Collins/Watts, 1980. 78-50765. ISBN 0-531-02126-2. 128p. illus. with photographs. \$6.90.

R  
7-10

Two Soviet scientists describe, in great detail, the research that has been going on, on several scientific fronts, about marine life, resources, and topography. The material is interesting, the text—printed in two columns interspersed with many color photographs—written in an authoritative tone and a rather dry, solid style. While the format is cluttered, the book is valuable for the amount of information it gives about research methods and findings; a volume in the "International Library," co-published by France, Germany, Great Britain, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., this has a slight emphasis on Russian research, understandable as being material with which the authors are most familiar, but there is no bias about quality of research. A list of suggestions for further reading and an index are included.

Ames, Mildred. *The Dancing Madness*. Delacorte, 1980. 80-65831. ISBN 0-440-01063-2. 134p. \$8.95.

Ad  
6-9

Mary begins her story by confessing that she is in love with a teacher of seventh grade science and is desolate because he is transferring and she'll never see him again. Since this relationship never becomes an important part of the story, its implied importance is jarring; what the story is really about is the corrosive effect of the depression era, and the major character is Mary's older sister Sue Ellen. A would-be dancer, Sue Ellen has lost her job as a clerk for stealing, enters a dance marathon and is later deserted by her dance partner (with whom she's in love) and commits suicide. Much of the story is devoted to vivid depictions of the exhausting madness of marathon dancing, and Ames is at her best here and, although it is almost too strong, in the characterization of the girls' domineering, whining mother. In sum, the book has some strong facets, but they overpower the rest of the story.

Anderson, Lydia. *Death*. Watts, 1980. 79-23683. ISBN 0-531-04107-7. 66p. illus. with photographs. \$5.90.

R  
4-6 Written in a direct and simple style, comprehensive in coverage and candid in tone, this covers almost every aspect of the topic briefly but adequately. Anderson discusses the cycle of life for all living things, including human beings; the ways in which we mourn and bury (or cremate, or donate to medical research) the dead; the legal definition of death, and what the end to life means medically; beliefs in life after death; and the changes in medical knowledge and hygiene that have made the aged a larger component of our population. A bibliography and an index are appended.

Arnold, Caroline. *Five Nests*; illus. by Ruth Sanderson. Dutton, 1980. 79-19892. ISBN 0-525-29760-X. 32p. \$7.95.

R  
2-3 Soft in line, the careful sketches that illustrate the five kinds of birds described in the text are shown only in black and white. While the book can't, therefore, be used for identification, it can give young readers some ideas about the several ways in which male and female birds divide the care of the young. Arnold discusses cowbirds, Mexican jays, redwing blackbirds, rheas, and robins, explaining how their behavior patterns are similar in some respects and different in others. Direct, simple, and easy to read.

Asch, Frank. *Starbaby*; written and ill. by Frank Asch. Scribner, 1980. 79-24309. ISBN 0-684-16490-6. 26p. \$9.95.

NR  
4-5 yrs. Is THAT where babies come from, the stars? Is THAT how they come to earth? Fantasy is stretched tissue-thin in a picture book about a naked child (genitalia visible, large bald head looking hydrocephalic) who plays in moon dust, flies through space, visits other starbabies, and falls into the ocean. He lives happily underwater for a time, riding on the backs of fish and sleeping in a giant clam shell, until he is caught in a fisherman's net. "Just what I've always wanted," says the fisherman's wife, and she pins a diaper on him. And that's how Starbaby gets toys and a puppy and lots of good things to eat and his own little bed. The illustrations, although technically proficient, add little to a puerile story.

Avi. *The History of Helpless Harry; To Which Is Added a Variety of Amusing and Entertaining Adventures*; illus. by Paul O. Zelinsky. Pantheon Books, 1980. 80-10947. Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-84505-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-394-94505-0. 179p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.99.

Ad  
4-6 Harry is eleven, he does not like to be addressed as Horatio (his name), he does not like Miss Trowbridge, and he particularly does not like the fact that his parents are leaving Miss Trowbridge in charge of their son and home while they go on a trip. All of the trouble that ensues in this volatile situation is due to Harry's density; to the fact that Miss Trowbridge is secretly married; the fact that Constable Narbut doesn't know she is married, proposes, and is infuriated and vengeful at her rejection of his proposal; the fact that a sanctimonious and mercenary quack, Mr. Skatch, is about; and—most particularly—the fact that Harry's father had left information as to the whereabouts of his money box. This is an invitation to farce, and farcical indeed is the web of misconstructions that follows, with hapless Harry as the dupe of Skatch and the remorseless accuser of innocent Miss Trowbridge. This has a good deal of nonsense, a good deal of fun with the orotund language of the period (1845), and a good deal of action; it is weakened somewhat by the fact that nobody (particularly Harry) can see through anything.

Bach, Alice. *Waiting for Johnny Miracle*. Harper, 1980. 79-2813. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020348-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020349-8. 240p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.79.

R 7-10 Bach quotes one of the adolescent patients, in her jacket-flap note, as a prime reason for writing this novel based on her experience as a volunteer working with children who have cancer: "If you write about what it's really like for us, maybe people will treat me the way they did before they heard about my cancer." This is one of the strong themes in the story of Becky, an adolescent who has an operable malignant tumor; another is the way in which the patients' families are affected. Becky's twin, Theo, is the sounding board for many of Bach's observations in a candid, sophisticated story about the way a cancer patient feels about her illness, about the hospital and other patients, about her future. The writing has vitality and depth as well as inherent drama; it concludes with a successful plan to arrange a night of love for Becky's dying roommate, a fifteen-year-old who has wistfully told Becky that she would like to experience sex before she dies.

Beckman, Delores. *My Own Private Sky*. Dutton, 1980. 79-23341. ISBN 0-525-35510-3. 154p. \$7.95.

R 4-6 \* Arthur, eleven, describes his feelings of inadequacy and apprehension when he faces a new school and new peers; he's slight, he has prominent buck teeth, and he's terrified by the swimming lessons his mother insists he take. Because his widowed mother works, Arthur has to have supervision, and it is arranged that he stay with elderly Mrs. Kearns. The prospect is not enchanting—but Arthur very quickly succumbs to his new friend's warmth, honesty, and enjoyably eccentric ways. He is therefore stunned when she is in an accident and loses a leg, and he is deeply troubled by the fact that she loses her initiative and refuses to try to walk with an artificial leg. Arthur's facing his own trial at the same time: the test in his swimming class; and he comes to the pool even more shaken because he has just angrily berated Mrs. Kearns for her apathy. The story ends, believably, with each of the two drawing strength from the other's loving concern. Never mawkish, the story is deeply moving, quietly amusing, always perceptive; while some of the characters are odd, all are strongly drawn, and the writing style is outstanding. An excellent first book.

Berenstain, Stanley. *The Berenstain Bears' Christmas Tree*; written and illus. by Stan and Jan Berenstain. Random House, 1980. 80-5087. Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-84566-8; Library ed. ISBN 0-394-94566-2. 61p. Trade ed. \$4.95; Library ed. \$5.99.

NR K-2 An oversize flat has a rhyming Christmas story, undersize but equally flat. Here the frenetic bear family is preparing to decorate a tree, getting out all their ornaments and then realizing they have forgotten the tree. Pop and the two children set off to find the perfect tree; each time Pop thinks he's found it, he discovers that it's the home of other creatures. Back they go to buy a tree, as Mom had suggested, but the trees are all sold. However, when they near home, Pop and the children see that all the creatures they've spared have decorated their house with every family ornament, a grateful tribute that—in a sudden excess of sugar frosting—shows the true meaning of Christmas. And the "real Christmas Star" fills the sky with a silvery light, and the true Christmas spirit fills the heart of every bear. A mawkish ending to a contrived story written in often-halting rhyme and meter.

Billington, Elizabeth T. *Part-time Boy*; illus. by Diane de Groat. 79-23273. ISBN 0-7232-6175-X. 88p. \$6.95.

R 3-5 Jamie's mother worries about him: he has no friends, his two older brothers never play with him, and he seldom talks. Jamie, ten, who tells the story, knows that Mom worries and therefore isn't surprised when she's glad to meet his secret friend,

Mattie. Mattie's a young neighbor, on the staff of the National Science Center, and has made quiet Jamie feel at home on his visits. Since she often has part-time animals boarding, Jamie asks if he can be her part-time boy when she goes off to her summer home. This is a story so quiet it's almost tepid (not an inappropriate mood for the quiet teller) and there are one or two bits of contrivance (Mattie's one other visitor teaches Jamie soccer techniques, and that just happens to be the game his brothers are playing when he gets home) but the story has some bits of nature lore, a pleasant friendship that develops between Jamie and an equally taciturn boy from a farm near Mattie's cabin, and of course the friendship between Jamie and Mattie to give it substance.

Bodecker, N. M. *A Person from Britain Whose Head Was the Shape of a Kitten; And Other Limericks*; written and illus. by N. M. Bodecker. Atheneum, 1980. 79-22779. ISBN 0-689-50152-8. 64p. \$6.95.

Ad 3-5 Addicts of Bodecker's merry, often mad, verses may be disappointed in this book of limericks, illustrated with amusing little sketches. The lilting rhyme is here, but the limericks too often have a flat punch line, and there are several selections in which Bodecker uses the same word to complete the rhyme scheme. For example: "A horrid old person of Florence / regarded most things with abhorrence / he thought hummingbirds dumb / he could not abide gum / and cared nothing for Tom, Dick or Florence." Nonsensical enough to appeal, but not as deft as the poems in *It's Raining Said John Twain* or *Let's Marry Said the Cherry*.

Brown, Marion (Marsh). *Homeward the Arrow's Flight*. Abingdon, 1980. 80-11957. ISBN 0-687-17300-0. 175p. \$7.95.

Ad 7-9 Susan La Flesche Picotte, sister of Susette (*Susette La Flesche, Voice of the Omaha Indians*, by Margaret Cray) made as much of a contribution to the welfare of her people as did her more widely known sister. This is an account of the years in which she left the reservation to go to school and decided to become a doctor. She graduated at the head of her class; rare as it was for a woman to become a doctor in the nineteenth century, it was even more unusual for a woman who was a Native American. The writing style is ornate, occasionally fulsome, and the text is highly fictionalized, but the facts are interesting enough to alleviate such weaknesses to a great extent. Unfortunately, no sources for the facts are cited.

Bunting, Eve. *The Robot Birthday*; illus. by Marie De John. Dutton, 1980. 79-19185. ISBN 0-525-38542-8. 80p. (Smart Cat Books) \$7.95.

Ad 1-2 Tinted pencil drawings illustrate a story about Pam and Kerry, twins who are given a robot as a birthday present. The robot is a great success, especially when it frightens off some older children who are bullying the twins and their friends, and when it helps prevent a driving accident in bad weather. Their mother, a divorcee, is embarrassed because she has no flares in the car, but the twins assure her she's very smart; a teacher of electronics, she has made the robot. The writing style is adequate, the story a bit pat here and there; both the maternal prowess and the idea of having a robot of one's own should appeal to readers. Like other books in this "Smart Cat" series, this has been tested by Fry and Spache formulas.

Burchard, Marshall. *Sports Hero: Terry Bradshaw*. Putnam, 1980. 79-27656. ISBN 0-399-61133-9. 95p. illus. with photographs. \$6.29.

Ad 4-6 A biography that, like most sports biographies, focuses on the player's professional career, this gives a few facts about Bradshaw's personal life (an unhappy first marriage, a happy second marriage to a skating star, a deep commitment to Christianity)



and few clues to his personality. Illustrated by photographs, the book describes Bradshaw's prowess as a child, his preference for football although he excelled at other sports, and the usual ups and downs of college athletics and the rookie years as a player for the Pittsburgh Steelers, with many game descriptions.

Carlson, Natalie Savage. *A Grandmother for the Orphelines*; illus. by David White. Harper, 1980. 80-7769. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020993-3; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020994-1. 91p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.79.

R  
3-5 Another book about the orphans who live, lovingly cared for by Madame Flattot and Genevieve, in an old castle in the forest of Fontainebleau. Here the twin themes are the children's adjustment to losing their beloved Genevieve, who marries a young farmer, and their determination to acquire a grandmother. Prime mover in the campaign is the youngest orphan, Josine, who even locks one candidate in the castle dungeon, promising to let her out if she will be the orphanage grandmother. When a pair of elderly travellers turns up in the barn, it is clear they were destined to become grandmother and grandfather; in fact, since Madame needs help with her work, they are hired, to their and everybody's delight. This sequel has the same ingenuous sweetness and ebullience as the earlier books; the writing ripples on in engaging fashion, there are no villains, and it is a world in which children are lovable and loved.

Clements, Bruce. *Anywhere Else but Here*. Farrar, 1980. 80-11345. ISBN 0-374-30371-1. 152p. \$8.95.

R  
6-9 Molly, thirteen, is the narrator in a book written with flair and a firm control of structure and characterization; the style is vigorous, with particularly good dialogue. Molly's father, a printer, has charitably bought out his partner Shelby, and this has precipitated a financial crisis; he and Molly plan to move to another town and begin a new venture. With Shelby's inheritance of a family fortune, and his coming marriage to Molly's aunt, comes an offer to take Papa into his business. Molly wants to get out of town. The situation is complicated by a visitor, a beautiful and selfish woman who is a cult follower, and who leaves her eight-year-old son to Molly's care, taking off for California. Molly secretly sells her one precious possession to get the down-payment for the new business, and the story ends with her acceptance of the fact that in their new home the family will consist of herself, her father, and the child who's been dumped in their laps. The relationships between the two children and between Molly and her father are drawn with depth and compassion; there are, in fact, other plot threads so subtly interwoven that the book has a rich, seamless quality.

Crompton, Anne Eliot. *Queen of Swords*. Methuen, 1980. 79-26496. ISBN 0-416-30611-X. 139p. \$8.95.

NR  
7-9 Sue and her illegitimate baby, Jason, are living in cramped poverty with Rianna, a friend whose tarot cards repeatedly spell out—through the Queen of Swords—rejection. Sue's parents don't know about Jason; when she takes him home on a visit, she finds that her mother has moved away and her father offers little support or solace. Sue's problem is that she has been offered a scholarship by a California art school, and she doesn't know what to do about Jason; she finally decides she can't give him up, that she'll find some social service agency that will help her. The story ends with mother and child boarding the bus, westward-bound. Save for the portions of the text in which Sue is reminiscing, present tense is used in a manner that seems artificial; the structure of the book is patchy, the writing style pedestrian; the major weakness, however, is that what is primarily a situation (making a decision about California) has been stretched tediously into a book.

Davidson, Mary S. *A Superstar Called Sweetpea*. Viking, 1980. 80-11985. ISBN 0-670-68478-3. 134p. \$8.95.

Ad 7-10 Teenage Elizabeth, forbidden by her parents to sing with a combo, gets her two best friends to help her in a web of lies and does it anyway. Her boyfriend complains that she's always busy, her parents worry because she's lost weight, and Elizabeth herself finally realizes that the gigs and rehearsals are crowding her life. She quits, but she knows that some day she will be a star. The book has some positive aspects: one of her best friends has cultural interests, a facet often missing in books set in the south; Liz has so good a friendship with a black tennis partner that they enjoy riding through residential neighborhoods peering at houses for sale, knowing that it will provoke curiosity about a black male and a white female. The writing style, although third person, uses contemporary adolescent catchwords in exposition to a jarring extent; occasionally the writing is careless, as when the author says, "She looked a little pale around the eyeballs." The story isn't substantial in structure and the writing style is flawed, but the characters are believable.

Deming, Richard. *The Paralegal*. Elsevier/Nelson, 1980. 79-27172. ISBN 0-525-66655-9. 142p. \$7.95.

R 7-12 Although some of the training programs for the comparatively new profession of paralegal assistants conclude with examinations for a certificate, there is in fact no licensing procedure that controls the profession, nor has the American Bar Association established any standards. A paralegal cannot give legal advice or represent a client in court, but can do legal research, prepare papers and interrogations, and assist lawyers in court. In a large firm, the paralegal may specialize in only probate, or only litigation, and at times a case may be settled out of court because of the paralegal's findings. Chapters are devoted to paralegal training, to a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of paralegal work, to the problem of getting a job, and to a sampling of some actual cases handled by paralegal assistants, male and female. The text is direct and informative; its usefulness is increased by the addition of a list of schools offering paralegal training, a survey (by states) of employment opportunities and salary ranges, a list of paralegal associations, and a relative index.

De Paola, Thomas Anthony. *The Family Christmas Tree Book*; written and illus. by Tomie De Paola. Holiday House, 1980. 80-12081. ISBN 0-8234-0416-1. 32p. \$8.95.

Ad K-3 On a double track, this text shows a family picking out a tree, bringing it home, and decorating it, while interspersed with such remarks as "How beautiful. I have the Christmas stand ready," or, "How come you put the lights on first, Dad?" are parental or grandparental answers to questions about when Christmas trees came to America or comments on legends, anecdotes, or facts about Christmas trees. Pleasant enough, but the historical material, presented as dialogue, interferes with the simple family story and is not convincing as dialogue. The author has used this (information through dialogue) to good effect in such stories as *The Quicksand Book* but there the success was because of the humor of the manner of use. Here there is no humor, just some facts.

Dolan, Edward F. *Child Abuse*. Watts, 1980. 79-26266. ISBN 0-531-02864-X. 115p. \$6.90.

R 8- The abused are young children and adolescents, they are in all socio-economic strata, and their numbers are increasing. Whether the increase is due to more child abuse or more reported cases, a government survey showed that by 1976, reported cases (in a year) totalled over a half-million. Dolan discusses the history of child abuse and the legislation that has dealt with it, especially recent steps that have

given children more protection; he describes the various forms of child abuse, the causes of abuse, and the ways in which one can get help for abused children—including therapy programs for abusive adults. The writing is serious but not heavy, the tone objective, the coverage broad. A reading list and an index are appended.

Emery, Anne. *Stepfamily*. Westminster, 1980. 79-26908. ISBN 0-664-32660-9. 141p. \$9.50.

M Liza is the only one of the four Mackay children who is not happy about their  
6-8 widowed father's marriage to Maggie; she likes Maggie, but not her daughter Jennie. She more than likes Jennie's brother Steve, but he acts as though Liza didn't exist. In fact, although Liza occasionally is irritated by Maggie or Jennie, it's a fairly smooth and fairly brief adjustment period; most of the story is about Steve, oldest of the seven step-children; he is the only one who tries to get in touch with his father (an embezzler who has fled to safety in Brazil), the only one in trouble academically, and the only one who has been in trouble with the police. When the two small boys in the family imitate Steve by shop-lifting, Liza's father reads the riot act; the story ends with Steve dropping out of school to join the Coast Guard. There are didactic echoes throughout the text, and there's an inconsistency in the concentration of much of it on Liza, a protagonist who hardly figures in the action (her role is in minor conflicts and problems) but is used as a channel for Steve's story. The writing style is adequate, but there is little depth of characterization.

Esley, Joan. *The Visit*; illus. by Eloise Wilkin. Rand McNally, 1980. 80-12934. ISBN 0-528-82286-1. 29p. \$5.95.

Ad Visiting a great-aunt and great-uncle, Abigail feels overwhelmed by the big house,  
4-6 the sedate cat and dog, and the strangeness of the experience. When Great-aunt Lavinia takes Abigail to the attic, things change; there are old-fashioned clothes to try on, and all sorts of toys. Rolling a hoop, Abigail makes friends with the child next door, and by the time Mother comes to pick her up, Abigail's only wish is for a longer visit next time. The book is an oversize flat, the illustrations nicely detailed in conventional representational style, with Abigail looking like a greeting-card child or paper doll. Palatable, but flatly written, this doesn't fully explore the angst of the small child away from home; the text, like the illustrations, is prettified.

Farber, Norma. *How the Hibernators Came to Bethlehem*; illus. by Barbara Cooney. Walker, 1980. 80-7685. Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-6352-9; Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-6353-7. 26p. Trade ed. \$6.95; Library ed. \$7.85.

Ad A poetic text and handsome paintings (cool blues, warm browns) of animals  
K-2 in the snow, walking in a long moonlight procession to the manger, blend to produce a book that is quietly reverent and scientifically questionable. Snow in the Holy Land? It is the star that wakes each hibernating creature, and "the star was singing, *Bethlehem!*" The star is "a silver feather" that taps Bat between his eyes; Bat sneezes "so loud" the star twinkles. The star "twirls a wand like a baton" and wakes Ground Squirrel, it digs open Badger's door "with a slender silver shovel," etc. Lyric, tender, and lovely to look at, but a bit precious.

Fisher, Paul R. *The Hawks of Fellheath*. Atheneum, 1980. 79-22080. ISBN 0-689-30741-1. 211p. \$9.95.

M In a sequel to *The Ash Staff* (Reviewed in the April, 1980 issue) the orphan band  
5-7 of Mon Ceth has been living for two years at a school in Thrinedor, all of them becoming restless. After one (Gareth) leaves and another (Llan) dies the rest set out to find young Mole, who has suddenly run off to the north of the land. Many

adventures later they are reunited (in part due to the talking sword that has saved them before) and triumph over some of the evil forces of the Other World. Like the first book, this is heavily laden with place and proper names, magical abilities and objects, a complex hierarchy; the writing style is uneven, at times awkward.

Fodor, Ronald V. *Angry Waters; Floods and Their Control*; illus. with photographs. Dodd, 1980. 79-24729. ISBN 0-396-07799-4. 64p. \$4.95.

Ad A geologist describes the several causes of floods, the ways they can be predicted, and the means that have been used to prevent or ameliorate disastrous consequences.  
5-7 The writing is direct and clear, although it tends to be repetitive in describing specific disasters. A final page gives suggestions for what to do in case of flash floods ("Owlie Skywarn tells you what to do . . .") and an index is appended.

Fox, Paula. *A Place Apart*. Farrar, 1980. 80-36717. ISBN 0-374-35985-7. 192p. \$9.95.

R Victoria is thirteen when she begins her story; her father has recently died, she and her mother have moved to a small town, and she is quickly enthralled by Hugh, several years older than she. Oddly self-contained, Hugh dominates her thoughts if not her time, and Victoria admires him although her one other friend, Elizabeth, and her mother think he is a poseur. Hugh drops her for a new classmate, and then Victoria learns that Hugh is just as quick to drop Tom; finally, she sees that Hugh has no real affection for anyone, and what she misses is not Hugh himself but the way he had made her feel. When the breach comes (Hugh's family moves, and Victoria's mother is about to remarry and move also) Victoria is over her pain. This is almost an adult novel, subtle and percipient in its relationships, mature in its bittersweetness; the characters are firmly drawn and the style is grave and polished.

Gardiner, John Reynolds. *Stone Fox*; illus. by Marcia Sewall. T.Y. Crowell, 1980. 79-7895. Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-03983-2; Library ed. ISBN 0-690-03984-0. 81p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.89.

Ad Gardiner's adaptation of a legend of the far west is illustrated with simply composed pencil drawings in a spare style that is suited to the poker-faced, cracker-barrel style of the writing. When his grandfather suddenly takes to his bed and refuses to talk, ten-year-old Willy takes over the harvesting of the potato crop. The doctor says there's nothing wrong with the old man; Willy figures out that he's despondent because of unpaid back taxes. Willy enters a race in which the favorite, a Shoshone named Stone Fox ("The odds were as high as a hundred to one that he'd win") has a team of Samoyeds. Willy has one dog. In the dogsled race that would bring just the amount needed to save the farm, Willy's gallant dog dies. Stone Fox stops his team, threatens to shoot anyone who goes past him, and watches in silence as Willy, carrying his dead pet, walks to the finish line. The Indian's kindness, Willy's loss of his dog, the last-minute saving of the farm, are all likely to appeal to readers; the book is weakened, however, by the slow start and a plodding style of writing.

Gauch, Patricia Lee. *Kate Alone*. Putnam, 1980. 80-15592. ISBN 0-399-20738-4. 107p. \$7.95.

Ad Fourteen, Kate was a loner; happy with her family, content to stay home, and devoted to her dog McDuff, who had just come back from the veterinarian's. She was horrified when Duff bit a family friend on the lips, and brooded about whether it would mean that her family would want the dog killed. Retreating, she upset her family by her solitary ways; finally she convinced herself it was a one-time thing—and then Duff bit a neighbor. That was it; that was the end of McDuff. The writing

style is adequate, and Gauch draws a believable picture of a loving family and of Kate's love for her dog, but the book is so intensely focused on the one problem that it becomes repetitive and heavy.

Gould, Joan. *Otherborn*. Coward, 1980. 79-26735. ISBN 0-698-20497-2. 160p. \$8.95.

R  
6-9 Because of a storm at sea, Mark and his sister Leggy (Allegra) are cast ashore on a tropical island, where they find one boy, who seems about their age, who speaks English fluently. The others are friendly but seldom communicative. Mark and Leggy can't quite understand their captors; are they willing to let them go or are they keeping them prisoners? Are they shielding some secret when they refuse to let Mark go up to the mountain village? Why are the villagers so jubilant when they find a very old person? Up to this point, the book seems a good but not unusual adventure story, but with the answers to the children's questions comes the fantastic element: birth is different in the Land of Light, where those who appear very old (born in caves, or "otherborn") are the beloved infants, and those who look like children are the tribal elders. An intriguing concept is convincing within the framework of the fantasy, which has good pace and suspense. Through her island characters, Gould also gives an interesting viewpoint of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of primitive life and the technological advances of today's civilization. In all, an exciting story.

Halacy, Daniel Stephen. *Census; 190 Years of Counting America*. Elsevier/Nelson, 1980. 80-10361. ISBN 0-525-66661-3. 240p. illus. with photographs. \$9.95.

R  
8- Following a lengthy historical section on censuses of the past, in other countries and then in the United States, Halacy describes the process of census taking, the sorts of facts that are gathered, and some of the uses to which such facts are put. Readers may find the material on new techniques and future censuses especially interesting, or respond to the human interest in the chapter that describes the work of census takers, but the chief use of the book probably will be as a source for the practical, useful information it gives. The material is well-organized, the writing style a bit stiff, the coverage good. A bibliography and a relative index give access to the considerable amount of information in the text.

Hamilton, Virginia. *Jahdu*; illus. by Jerry Pinkney. Greenwillow, 1980. 79-16039. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-80246-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-84246-1. 55p. (Read-Alone Books) Trade ed. \$5.95; Library ed. \$5.71.

R  
1-3 Curiously carved and lucent beads on a storyteller's chain, anecdotes about the great Jahdu (*The Time-Ago Tales of Jahdu*) are linked to form a story for beginning readers. Although more simply written, the prose has the same lyric quality as Hamilton's first Jahdu tales. Here Jahdu is taunted as he meets other creatures, is told that he has lost his power, and is upset because he has lost his shadow. Being Jahdu, he solves the situation and regains his power, in an ending that should satisfy readers; what may appeal to some readers even more, however, is the imagery Hamilton uses and the playfulness with which she invents words: "Don't get so poof and pahft," Shadow says, and repeatedly Jahdu says, in moments of stress, "Woogily!"

Hanlon, Emily. *The Wing and the Flame*. Bradbury, 1980. 80-15082. ISBN 0-87888-168-9. 160p. \$8.95.

Ad  
7-9 Most of the story of Eric's two dear friends is told retrospectively, when he comes home from college. He hasn't seen Owen, the elderly sculptor, for five years; he hunts for him and finds that Owen has died. He talks to his other friend, Chris, about



the rare quality of their own relationship, although it had taken him some time to adjust to the fact that there was a homosexual aspect to their friendship. Hanlon depicts the intricacies of both relationships with insight and dignity, yet—although the story is written in fluent style—this lacks the warmth of her earlier books, in part perhaps because it shuts out other relationships, in part because the pace is slow.

Heller, Linda. *Alexis and the Golden Ring*; written and illus. by Linda Heller. Macmillan, 1980. 79-23134. ISBN 0-02-743540-7. 29p. \$8.95.

Ad  
K-3 Softened by stippling, the nicely textured but bleak illustrations have a static quality; the text is in the fairytale tradition but is poorly synthesized. Alexis, on his way to his wedding with Natasha, stops to help a poor old woman; he does one chore after another, days go by, winter comes. When he leaves, the old woman gives him a worn gold ring. "It will help you as you have helped me," she says. Each time he touches the ring, Alexis has a magic adventure; eventually he comes to his destination and finds that the whole wedding party has frozen. The ring thaws them, they all dance merrily at the wedding. No explanation of why they waited in the cold and snow. The ending is weak; also weak is the fact that the adventures Alexis has do not always help him; rather, they slow his progress; the structure therefore seems contrived. The writing style is adequate.

Heller, Wendy. *Clementine and the Cage*; illus. by Rex J. Irvine. Kalimát, 1980. 79-28063. ISBN 0-933770-12-X. 29p. \$7.95.

NR  
3-4 All the other small birds in the pet store cage derided Clementine because she kept trying to fly. She had been listening to the toucan in the next cage talk about the sun and the sky; when the toucan disappeared one day and the lock of his cage proved to have been gnawed through, Clementine was sure he was flying somewhere in the sky. When the shopkeeper took her out, she wriggled out of his grasp and flew out the window, and—the story ends—" . . . she stretched out her wings and soared toward the sun." The illustrations are adequate if conventional in technique; the pages are spacious and the print large; the story, unfortunately, goes nowhere. A bird craves freedom and gets it, but to what avail? There's a slow, slow start, a moment of action, and an abrupt end; the reader doesn't know if the bird even lives past soaring to the sun, so that all of Clementine's practicing and pondering bring her nothing more than instant gratification.

Hill, Douglas. *Galactic Warlord*. Atheneum, 1980. 79-22604. ISBN 0-689-50164-1. 127p. \$7.95.

M  
7-9 First published in England, a science fantasy in the bug-eyed monster, Superman tradition. Keill Randor is the last of a specially trained corps of legionnaires: his home planet has been irradiated, and he wants to find his colleagues before he dies. Rescued by a small group of top scientists who have secretly banded together (a familiar SF device) he is guided by an intelligent birdlike creature with telepathic powers (another familiar SF device) to fight the mysterious enemy who wants to take over the world; he is saved in part because one of the scientists has replaced all his bones with metal, "molecule by molecule," to reverse the radiation sickness. So Keill goes out to do battle, alone, against the Ultimate Evil Force, and wins. This is standard stuff, neither original nor well written; the author depends on action and exaggeration for his effects, so that the book may appeal to some confirmed SF buffs—if they can put up with the deplorably small print.

Hillman, Priscilla. *A Merry-Mouse Christmas A B C*; written and illus. by Priscilla Hillman. Doubleday, 1980. 79-6586. Trade ed. ISBN 0-385-15596-4; Library ed. ISBN 0-385-15507-2. 26p. Trade ed. \$4.95; Library ed. \$5.90.

M  
4-6  
yrs. Sentimentalized, round-eyed mice are pictured in greeting card style drawings in the pinafore-mop cap genre, with a verse for each letter on spacious pages. Sample verses: "D is for drum / being played by a mouse / going rat-a-tat-tat / all through the house / not a creature was stirring / not even a mouse." Any Christmas book has some appeal, and any alphabet book has some utility, but this is a sugary blend that achieves distinction in neither category.

Hoff, Sydney. *Merry Christmas, Henrietta!* written and illus. by Syd Hoff. Garrard, 1980. 79-19787. ISBN 0-8116-4419-7. 48p. \$5.58.

Ad  
1-2 All the other farm animals agreed with the hen, Henrietta, when she said that Farmer Gray was so good to them that he deserved a Christmas present. He gave her a lift into town; she searched but couldn't find the right present. Henrietta told Santa her problem, and he said if she would be his helper he'd solve her problem. She helped; he gave her two packages, one of which proved to be gloves for Farmer Gray, and the other a locket for her. All the animals agreed it was the best Christmas ever. The story is adequately structured (problem and solution) and is adequately written for the beginning independent reader (print size, vocabulary level, sentence length, concepts) but it has a tepid quality alleviated somewhat by the cartoon style drawings.

Horwitz, Elinor Lander. *On the Land; American Agriculture from Past to Present*; illus. with photographs. Atheneum, 1980. 79-3545. ISBN 0-689-50165-X. 132p. \$8.95.

R  
8- A fine text considers the complex answer to a question posed in the author's preface: "How did a nation of small landholders become a country in which over one hundred thousand farm families are forced each year to abandon the land?" Does expanding productivity equate with successful progress? The changes in agricultural practices that have accompanied technological and agrarian improvement, the effects of economic and social pressures, and the urbanization that makes incursions on available farm land have all tended to decimate the small family farm and militate toward the large corporate farm. Horwitz gives ample historical background for understanding the changes and the problems; in a text that is carefully organized and lucid, she concludes with a chapter entitled "Can We Save the Family Farm?" that considers federal legislation and programs that affect agriculture, state extension programs, changes in estate tax laws, the encouragement of cooperative programs, help to minority farmers, and the establishment of marketing projects like the Greenmarket in New York or Quincy Market in Boston. Suggestions for further reading are included.

Isadora, Rachel. "*No, Agatha!*" written and illus. by Rachel Isadora. Greenwillow, 1980. 79-26734. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-80274-5; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-84274-7. 29p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.63.

Ad  
K-2 Isadora's finely etched black and white drawings for her story of a small, obstreperous child's ocean voyage are handsome and evocative, although the read-aloud audience may not appreciate the niceties of Edwardian dress and customs. Agatha doesn't at all fit the "proper miss" ideal of the period: she plays leapfrog with boys and stands on her head, she doesn't sit decorously with the other little girls, and she forgets to put up her parasol and shield herself from the sun. On the last night of the voyage, she comes to the ball but isn't asked to dance, so she goes up on deck

and dances alone, then dreams about dancing with the moon. The book has nostalgic charm, but it lacks a story line and the ending seems to have little to do with the rest of the story, shifting from Agatha-the-happy-hoyden to Agatha-the-romantic; not that a child can't be both, but that here there is no connection between the two.

Joerns, Consuelo. *The Foggy Rescue*; written and illus. by Consuelo Joerns. Four Winds, 1980. 80-11375. ISBN 0-590-07744-9. 34p. \$7.95.

Ad The read-aloud audience likes action, it likes mice, it likes travel and adventure  
K-2 and achievers. Therefore this story, illustrated with tidy watercolors, simply composed but rather repetitive, ought to appeal—but it's weakened by contrivance and coincidence. Captain Mouse goes sailing off to China, and his wife is worried when he doesn't return as expected. She goes off to buy a foghorn. The three children just happen to find a boat and go sailing off to find their Papa. They see his cargo floating by, recognizable because it's floating near his cap; they crash into an island, and Papa just happens to be on it. He repairs their boat, they get home, and they are guided through the fog by Mrs. Mouse's foghorn and the big red Chinese lantern that just happens to have floated to just the right place. Stretched.

Jones, Penelope. *I'm Not Moving*; illus. by Amy Aitken. Bradbury, 1980. 79-13062. ISBN 0-87888-156-5. 29p. \$7.95.

Ad Tinted in pastel shades, the simple, uncluttered drawings are not outstanding, but  
4-6 they are nicely suited to the stripped, direct tone of the story, told by little Emmy.  
yrs. Emmy doesn't want to move; she particularly doesn't want to leave her nice, big digging hole. Several attempts to find alternate housing come to naught (her friend Babby's pillow has "a funny smell," another neighbor's cat snarls) and the smells of dinner at her own house are enticing, but Emmy decides she'll accompany the rest of her family when her father promises an even better digging hole. Adequately told, believable, but slight in structure and development.

Kemp, Gene. *Gowie Corby Plays Chicken*. Faber, 1980. ISBN 0-571-11405-9. 136p. \$11.95.

R Set in the same school that's the background for Kemp's Carnegie Award book,  
4-6 *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler*, this is framed by a father's announcement to his children that his old friend Rosie has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and a closing note in which he ends his reminiscences. In between, the real story, told by Gowie: an unhappy, rebellious boy, he was the bane of his teachers and the butt of his classmates before he met Rosie. Black, bright, and loving, Rosie became Gowie's dear friend and it was through her that he gained courage and self-confidence, even daring to admit that there were some things he wouldn't do. There's one delightful surprise in the closing sequence, and the story is full of lively classroom banter, schoolboy humor, and some truly touching scenes. Gowie and Rosie are memorable characters, and their relationship is a felicitous one; this is a "good read," but there are depth and substance underlying the fun.

Klein, Norma. *Breaking Up*. Pantheon Books, 1980. 80-10953. Trade Ed. ISBN 0-394-84445-9; Library ed. ISBN 0-394-94445-3. 207p. \$7.95.

Ad Ali and her brother Martin go to California for the summer to stay with their father  
7-9 and stepmother; Ali's especially pleased at the prospect of a reunion with her best friend, Gretchen. She finds that she's more attracted to Gretchen's brother Ethan than to her old boyfriend Teddy, and she frets because she knows that Gretchen adores Ethan and would be jealous if he and Ali became a twosome. This is one of the two major threads of the story: Ali and Ethan do fall in love and eventually

become lovers, and Gretchen does reject Ali. The other thread is the insistence by Ali's father that she ought to stay with him because he suspects that her mother has a lesbian relationship with the friend with whom she has been spending the summer. Ali's unhappy and confused until her mother shows up; Mom says it's true, she and Peggy are lovers; Ali goes back to New York and they all live together. Klein's characters are believable, her writing style is smooth and includes natural-sounding dialogue, and she has good insight into the complexities of human relationships. What weakens the book is that it's all at the same pitch: almost every relationship is a troubled one, so that the whole seems a plethora of problems.

Laklan, Carli. *Golden Girls; True Stories of Olympic Women Stars*. McGraw-Hill, 1980. 79-24052. ISBN 0-07-036074-X. 164p. illus. with photographs. \$8.95.

Ad 6-9 A compilation of brief biographies of women who were winners in Olympic competition; while there's a recurrent laudatory note, the book should appeal to readers because it gives more than the biographical information about individual athletes; it also—implicitly and explicitly—shows the changing role of women in sports and particularly in the Olympic Games. The writing style is adequate; a section of photographs is included, as is an index.

Lerner, Carol. *Seasons of the Tallgrass Prairie*; written and illus. by Carol Lerner. Morrow, 1980. 80-13078. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-22245-5; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-32245-X. 48p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.63.

R 5-\* Meticulously detailed fine-line drawings, carefully labelled, illustrate a text that describes the grasses and flowering plants in each of the seasons on the tall-grass prairie. Lerner's distinctive work cries for color, but her drawings are so exact that even the black and white pictures can be used for identifying plants. The text goes beyond mere description, however, since it discusses the ways in which prairie plants, deep-rooted, hold the soil and contribute to its richness, and the seasonal changes that bring new blooms and new colors. A list of plants mentioned or illustrated in the book is appended, arranged by common names but with scientific names provided.

Lindblom, Steven. *The Mouses' Terrible Halloween*; illus. by True Kelley. Lothrop, 1980. 79-26980. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-41950-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-51950-4. 48p. Trade ed. \$6.95; Library ed. \$6.67.

M 2-3 Just as they are preparing for a Hallowe'en costume party, the Mouse family realize that Dad forgot to pick up a pumpkin at Grandmaw's. He's in his burglar costume, so an alarm is sounded when he's seen. He dashes home, then discovers that he has brought home a huge potato instead of a pumpkin. (No explanation of how he got a root vegetable instead of one that grows above ground.) Then, instead of going to the party, they attend a pumpkin-shaped space ship that has just landed; the Martians take off and beam the Mouses right into the party, where Dad's costume wins a prize. And so on. Frenetic action, which will certainly appeal to many children, gives the story a labored quality. The illustrations, crayoned in orange and purple, have somewhat the same overwrought air.

Lowry, Lois. *Autumn Street*. Houghton, 1980. 80-376. ISBN 0-395-27812-0. 188p. \$6.95.

R 5-7 \* Elizabeth remembers. It was because of the war that Daddy went away, and she and Mama had gone to live at Grandfather's; there she learned to love Tatie, "bulky and brown and beautiful," and Tatie's illegitimate grandson Charles. Grandmother didn't like Elizabeth or her sister, and she would certainly not want to see Elizabeth

playing with Charles out in front of the house where the neighbors could see him. The two small children (they're six) play in back of the Autumn Street house, sometimes with the twins next door, one of whom is placid, the other—Noah—a sadistic bully, and they feel tremendous guilt when Noah dies after they've been sitting with him, ignoring his crying. They know they should stay out of the woods at the end of Autumn Street, but Charles wants to look for caves, and Elizabeth goes along and then leaves him because she's feeling ill; while she is home and ill, she learns that Charles has been murdered by a known eccentric who had always been thought harmless. It is Tatie who comforts her, who makes Elizabeth understand that her cold, proud grandmother's coming to a black church to attend the service for Charles is an act of the deep love she cannot bring herself to show. Lowry has most adroitly woven these and other familial relationships into a story that has nuance, depth, poignancy, and insight; through Elizabeth's memories, she gives a child's candid, painful view of fear and love. A memorable book.

Maiorano, Robert. *Worlds Apart; The Autobiography of a Dancer from Brooklyn*. Coward, 1980. 79-25312. ISBN 0-698-20505-7. 173p. illus. with photographs. \$9.95.

Ad 7- A soloist with the New York City Ballet describes his childhood in Brooklyn, where he and his older sister lived in poverty with an ambitious mother who made many sacrifices to see that Robert and Johanna had training in dance. Maiorano writes with candor (Brooklyn street talk was rough; his mother and sister had bitter quarrels) about his home life and about his experiences as a student of ballet. He became a member of the company at the age of fifteen, and describes the excitement of touring Europe at that age. For any balletomane, an absorbing book; there are some instances of dwelling on trivia, but on the whole the writing style has vitality and the book momentum.

Mazer, Norma Fox. *Mrs. Fish, Ape, and Me, the Dump Queen*. Dutton, 1980. 79-20262. ISBN 0-525-35380-1. 138p. \$8.95.

Ad 4-6 Joyce, who tells the story, is an orphan who lives with her uncle, Old Dad; they live near the town dump, which he manages and keeps clean and pleasant. Joyce can understand why her classmates call Old Dad the Ape; he has a heavy torso and long arms, but why can't they understand that the dump doesn't really smell, why do they call her the dump queen and pretend she smells bad? Lonely and unhappy, Joyce turns to Mrs. Fish, the school custodian, for comfort. Fat, overdressed, and garrulous, Mrs. Fish even comes to help Joyce when Old Dad is incapacitated. He resents her—but, like Joyce, he succumbs to the woman's warmth and generosity; both of them miss her when she leaves, and Old Dad finally gives in to Joyce's pleading. Awkwardly, but not unwillingly, he asks Mrs. Fish to come and live with them, and she accepts. So life promises to be happier for Joyce; there's even a hint, at the end of the story, that a girl at school, who had been friendly until she learned from other classmates that Joyce lived at a garbage dump, has come around and wants to be friends again. The anguish of the outsider is vividly and realistically portrayed in this story, simply structured and well written, but it's marred a bit by the dominance of the two strong, almost overdrawn characters of taciturn, hostile Old Dad and the gushing, ever-giving, ever-forgiving Mrs. Fish.

Minshull, Evelyn White. *The Steps to My Best Friend's House*; illus. by Unada. Westminster, 1980. 79-25954. ISBN 0-644-32659-5. 143p. \$8.95.

M 5-7 Carol tells the story of her friendship with Trish, newly arrived in the neighborhood. She finds Trish enchanting, full of stories about her past and about her glamorous father, equally filled with grief about her mother's mental instability. It should



be obvious to most readers that Trish is a pathological liar: her stories are too varying and too elaborate to be true. It should also come as no surprise that all of her confidences about her mother are invented; it is Trish herself who is unstable, and her mother—about whom she has repeatedly lied—who has been protecting her. The story ends with Trish in the hospital, “. . . for a longer stay this time . . .” and Carol bitterly disillusioned and lonely, only consoled by her grandmother’s commonsense approach: Trish is ill, and a true friend will understand and forgive. The writing style is mediocre, the pace of the book slow, the characterization belabored rather than drawn with depth.

Mitchell, Barbara. *Cornstalks and Cannonballs*; illus. by Karen Ritz. Carolrhoda Books, 1980. 79-91304. ISBN 0-87614-121-1. 46p. \$4.95.

Ad 2-3 Part fact, part legend, this is a fictionalized account of an incident in a Delaware coastal town during the War of 1812. When the people of Lewes refused to accede to the request of the British naval commander in the harbor that they provide food for his men, they were shot at. They calmly picked up the cannonballs and used them to shoot back; they also blackened cornstalks and anything else that might, from a distance, be taken for a gun and fooled the British into thinking they were so many and so well-armed that the fleet sailed away. The story is stiffly told, simply written, and illustrated with scratchy dark blue ink drawings that have the same awkward quality as the text.

Murphy, Louise. *My Garden; A Journal for Gardening around the Year*; illus. by Lisa C. Ernst. Scribner, 1980. 79-29650. ISBN 0-684-16486-8. 160p. \$8.95.

M 4-6 Murphy goes through the calendar year, giving advice on many aspects of gardening, in a rambling, discursive text that also includes poems and stories, background information about some plants, and occasional comments on topics that have little or nothing to do with gardening. There is so much that is tangential that it may be an irritant to the reader who is looking for practical advice. The book is also weakened by the random arrangement of material and by the omission of some kinds of information that is provided in most books for the beginning reader: having the soil tested and supplying missing elements or soil-lighteners, citing garden pests and explaining how to cope with them, giving specific directions for planting. An index is appended.

Navarra, John Gabriel. *Earthquake*; illus. with photographs. Doubleday, 1980. 79-8938. Trade ed. ISBN 0-385-15080-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-385-15081-4. 95p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$8.90.

R 5-8 A professor of geoscience, Navarra is both authoritative in his field and practiced as a science writer; his text is logically arranged and his subject handled with clarity and range. He discusses the causes of earthquakes, the ways in which they can be measured and predicted, and the various degrees of seismic activity, including tsunamis. The book concludes with a discussion of coping with earthquakes, and with an index. Unfortunately, several illustrations have been badly placed by the publishers; for example, “The photo opposite was taken a few days later . . .” is stated on a page discussing an earthquake in Pakistan; on the opposite page are two drawings of the Nazca and South American plates, while an unlabelled picture, two pages later, appears to be the photograph to which the text refers.

Nister, Ernest. *Animal Tales*; written and illus. by Ernest Nister. Philomel (formerly Collins), 1980. 80-10199. ISBN 0-529-05612-7. 10p. \$7.95.

SpC While young children may be intrigued by this reproduction of a portion of the  
K-3 original (1894) pop-up book, *Happy Families and Their Tales*, it is probable that it would be of primary interest to students of children's literature. There are no tabs or pinwheels here; parts of the recto pages pull down to disclose stand-up paintings of children and animals, while the bisque verso pages are illustrated with line drawings of animals. Four of the anecdotes told by animals are in prose, and "The Pig's Tale" is in verse. An example of the tenor of the tales is "The Goat's Tale," in which Gilbert the Goat tells the other animals how he and the farm dog became friends. Both the writing style and the illustrations are dated, but the brevity of the tales and the fact that they are about animals indicate that they may still have some interest for the read-aloud audience.

Oxford Scientific Films. *Dragonflies*; illus. with photographs by George Bernard. Putnam, 1980. 79-25942. ISBN 0-399-20731-7. 27p. \$7.95.

R Enlarged photographs in full color show details of the anatomy and habitat of two  
3-5 varieties of dragonfly and one variety of damselfly. In the format usually followed in this excellent series, an unillustrated text gives information about appearance, habits and habitat, mating and birth, and—in this book—the changes and molts of the larval form, which is water-dwelling. The text is followed by captioned photographs, the captions picking up the salient facts of the text. A handsome book, and an informative one, this gives some understanding of the ecological setting and of the dragonfly's place in the food chain as well as of its own life cycle.

Parish, Peggy. *I Can—Can You?* illus. by Marylin Hafner. Greenwillow, 1980. 79-26041. ISBN 0-688-80279-6. Bagged set of four books; each book 10p. \$4.95 per set.

R Four little books, each a bit more difficult in concepts and vocabulary, come in  
2-3 a plastic bag; the sturdy pages are almost indestructible and have bright pictures  
yrs. with plenty of white space to set them off. In the first book the focus is on activities, and the format for the pages is exemplified by "Rebecca can clap her hands," picture, "Can you clap your hands." In the second book, Jenny swings and Sam can rock his doll and eat with a spoon. By level three, Sam can jump and play hide and seek, and by level 4, Jenny can ride a tricycle and Jason has learned how to share. In each book, the children are a bit older and have acquired new knowledge and physical skills. The books are attractive, and they are useful both for the progress they record (and the child's satisfaction, when listening, at achievement of similar progress) and for the fact that they can illuminate, for small children, concepts of growth and change.

Paterson, Katherine. *Jacob Have I Loved*. T. Y. Crowell, 1980. 80-668. Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04078-4; Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04079-2. 216p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.79.

R ". . . Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," was the quotation that her  
6-9 senile, spiteful grandmother had pointed out to Louise. That was at the time when Louise's twin, Caroline, was given money to leave the island and study, something Louise had dreamed of. Always, always, Caroline got what Louise wanted: beauty, a promising career, even the young man Louise loved. This theme of twin-envy is set on a small island in Chesapeake Bay, the setting made vivid and colored by local idiom. The story is told by Louise in retrospect, after she has broken away from the island and found her own career and her own family; it is brought full circle when

she (now a nurse in a mountain community) delivers twins to a patient; the first is healthy, the second frail and needing attention, and Louise tells the newborn infants' grandmother to hold the first-born, "Hold him as much as you can." A strong novel, this, with depth in characterization and with vitality and freshness in the writing style.

Pelgrom, Els. *The Winter When Time Was Frozen*; tr. from the Dutch by Maryka and Rafael Rudnik. Morrow, 1980. 80-21224. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-22247-1; Library ed. 0-688-32247-6. 224p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.59.

R  
4-6 A World War II story, first published in the Netherlands, is set on a farm near Amsterdam, where the compassionate Farmer Everingen and his wife, Janna, have taken in Noortje Vanderhook and her father as well as Theo, a consumptive refugee. The oldest Everingen child, Evert, is Noortje's friend and at times her confederate in spying on the Germans who have commandeered the barn and the parlor for living quarters. The family also takes in another family of four and the infant daughter of a Jewish couple that's been sheltering in a cave and disappears. It is a hard, bitterly cold winter; the Everingens share a meal with any refugee who comes to their door, even helping a young German deserter. There is no strong story line here, but the book is replete with action and drama, the characters are fully developed, the writing style smooth, and the translation fluent and colloquial.

Pfeffer, Susan Beth. *About David*. Delacorte, 1980. 80-10581. ISBN 0-440-0093-9. 167p. \$8.95.

Ad  
8-10 Lynn, who tells the story, is seventeen; her close friend David, who has just killed his parents and himself, was the same age. David's other good friend, Jeffrey, has a breakdown; Lynn herself get help from a psychologist because her parents are worried about her difficulty in accepting the terrible truth, and she knows that part of her problem is worrying because she can't remember what David talked about at lunch the day of the tragedy. Through reading David's notebooks, through therapy, through time and the irrepressible resilience of youth, Lynn begins to forget a little, accept a lot, and regain interest in other people and in the college years ahead of her. And she comes to understand why David did what he did . . . and that's where the flaw of the book is: the focus on David, his motivation, Lynn's adjustment to both the loss and the murder-suicide, is so strong that such matters as a new boy at school, or a college entrance interview, seem interruptions rather than development; the unfolding of David's motivation has suspense and impact, and it over-balances the material about Lynn too much to merge with it even though some of the material has to do with her missing David.

Pierce, Jack. *The Freight Train Book*; written and illus. with photographs by Jack Pierce. Carolrhoda Books, 1980. 79-91307. ISBN 0-87614-123-8. 27p. \$5.95.

M  
2-4 This consists of a series of captioned photographs, with two facing pages devoted to each kind of car, from the engine to the caboose, plus a few pieces of special equipment. Some of the photographs are either unclear or cropped, but most are of adequate quality; a few have no captions and are not easily identifiable. The pictures and captions together give some facts about freight trains, but there is no cohesion in the presentation; in the double-page spread on the engineer's cab, for example, there's a shot of part of the cab, another of the back of the engineer, a third of a hand on the engine power throttle, and there are five pictures of gauges, buttons, levers, and switches, two of which are not labelled. Of possible interest to train buffs, this is superficial coverage.

Platt, Kin. *The Ghost of Hellsfire Street*. Delacorte, 1980. 80-10446. Trade ed. ISBN 0-440-02795-0; Library ed. ISBN 0-440-02796-9. 246p. Trade ed. \$9.95; Library ed. \$9.43.

M  
5-7 There's some humor and plenty of action in Platt's story, in which the narrator, Steve, is the ever-suspicious, ever-tenacious detective despite his youthfulness. Steve's wildest suspicions are doubted by his friend Miranda and by her father, Sheriff Landry, but all of them prove to be true. One wonders if Platt has made an effort to see just how heavily he can lay it on; there's a kidnapped scientist, a medium who bilks a credulous old woman out of a million dollars, a pirate ghost, a dignified Shinnecock chieftain who lends Steve his sacred spirit bag, a venal politician, and so on. And a fire. Steve talks and talks to his dog. Everything comes out right, and it's all quite predictable and rather boring. Too bad, since Platt can do better.

Pomerantz, Charlotte. *The Tamarindo Puppy; And Other Poems*: illus. by Byron Barton. Greenwillow, 1980. 79-16584. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-80251-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-84251-8. 32p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.63.

R  
K-3 Illustrated with colorful drawings that have an awkward naivete, this charming collection of poems plays with language, English and Spanish, in a variety of ways; meanings are made clear by context or repetition in many poems, while some are in English and use only Spanish names. This should please and be comprehensible to those small listeners to whom Spanish is a first language as well as to those whose first language is English. Samples: "Take your bottle / Little bottle / Take your little botellita / Little, little / Pequenita / Botellita . . ." or, "Nada is nothing / Nothing at all / Trip on a nada / You never will fall . . ." The poems are fresh and litling, appealingly childlike in both subject matter and approach.

Potter, Marian. *Blatherskite*. Morrow, 1980. 80-18450. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-22249-8; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-32249-2. 192p. Trade ed. \$6.95; Library ed. \$6.67.

Ad  
4-6 Set on a Missouri farm in 1936, this is a cheery, homespun tale about a chatterbox, Maureen, who may remind some readers of Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm. Emotional, ingenuous and ingenious, Maureen often irritates people because she talks too much or too freely, but she's won over almost everybody by the end of the story, by which time she has talked a runaway older brother into coming home, saved the life of a younger brother (by having a through train stop and take him to St. Louis and a hospital), and won approval of a project that will supply a bridge to the town. The writing style is brisk, the rural and period details are naturally incorporated, and the thin plot line is carried through adequately, but the indomitable Maureen may seem cloying to some readers.

Powell, Anton. *The Rise of Islam*. Warwick, 1980. 79-89730. ISBN 0-531-09165-1. 44p. illus. \$6.90.

R  
5-8 One of a British series, the Modern Knowledge Library, this has the same cluttered format as do other books in the series: pages may have a broad column of print, or one or two narrow columns, and framed insets (in smaller type and with colored backgrounds) are placed in varying positions on the pages. The illustrations, color photographs of people, buildings, or art objects have similar random placement. Nevertheless, the book gives a great deal of information about the culture of Islam between the time of Muhammad's founding of the Muslim religion in the seventh century, until the sixteenth century. Powell describes the basic tenets of Islam, the spread of the Muslim faith and the power and opulence of its leaders; separate sections discuss such aspects of Islamic life as the role of women, medicine, slavery,

art, daily life, trade, etc. The writing is direct and serious; a glossary, an index, and an endpaper chronology (useful if not comprehensive) are included.

Robinet, Harriette Gillem. *Ride the Red Cycle*; illus. by David Brown. Houghton, 1980. 79-24905. ISBN 0-395-29183-6. 34p. \$6.95.

Ad 3-5 Crippled by a virus infection when he was two, Jerome (age eleven, black, in fifth grade) was confined to a wheelchair and had a slow, slurred way of speaking, conveyed in the text by remarks like "Here muhhh cycle. Papa gonna fit it for to rr-ride!" Jerome's mother thinks it dangerous for the boy to have a tricycle, but his father feels that Jerome can learn. He not only learns, but he asks an older sister to help him in secret practice sessions; he astounds his parents by taking part in a Labor Day parade, and even walks a few steps from his cycle to his wheelchair. Written by the mother of a handicapped child, this is realistic in its details of Jerome's problems and his progress, but the writing style is rather stiff and the dialogue awkward in its use of phonetic spelling; "Boy don't havta be . . ." and "Hope yuh told yuh Papa . . ."

Robinson, Nancy K. *Wendy and the Bullies*; illus. by Ingrid Fetz. Hastings House, 1980. 80-13366. ISBN 0-8038-8097-9. 128p. \$7.95.

Ad 2-4 Small, framed drawings are given texture by hatching and reflect the realistic representation of the text's classroom atmosphere. Afraid of the bullies in her neighborhood, Wendy is even more afraid of Stanley, the scourge of the third grade. She doesn't tell her mother about it, but Mom can tell that something is wrong, especially when Wendy pretends illness and then plays hookey. Wendy even keeps a map of the local bullies, and she's able to use it for another purpose when the class plans a street-by-street sale of raffle tickets. Some of Wendy's problems are solved when another classmate resists Stanley and when she herself gets to know the bully on her block (a girl) and understand her; she also finds that it helps to tell her parents and to hear about some of their childhood experiences with bullies. Not a strong plot, but a realistic depiction of a common childhood experience, this is adequately written, has natural dialogue and deals temperately with a child's effort to overcome fear and timidity.

Sarnoff, Jane. *If You Were Really Superstitious*; illus. by Reynold Ruffins. Scribner, 1980. 79-25577. ISBN 0-684-16443-4. 32p. \$7.95.

M 3-5 After a brief comment on the way in which most superstitions arose in the past as "explanations for things not understood," the authors list, in groups, the things one would believe if one were superstitious. The pages are crowded with text and illustrations, chunky people, animals, and objects in dun colors. Many of the superstitions discussed are included in an earlier book, *Take Warning! A Book of Superstitions*, which is in alphabetical arrangement; here the superstitions are grouped by "Good Morning," "Heads," "Hands," "Feet," "Cures," "Food & Drink," "School," and so on. Children are always curious about such things, but with no table of contents or index, and given the fact that much of the material repeats the content of the earlier book, this seems of minimal value.

Schaaf, Peter. *The Violin Close Up*; written and illus. with photographs by Peter Schaaf. Four Winds, 1980. 79-6337. ISBN 0-590-07655-8. 25p. \$6.95.

Ad 2-4 Photographs of excellent clarity show each part of a violin and a bow, while the text explains very simply "The shape of the box makes the tone loud and beautiful," or "The neck supports the fingerboard, and leads to the head." The book is attractive,



but it has very little to say. Readers in the primary grades can easily get this sort of information from an encyclopedia, which might also explain something about playing the instrument, or about the physical laws that govern the sounds made by a player.

Sedgwick, Rae. *The White Frame House*. Delacorte, 1980. 80-65838. Trade ed. ISBN 0-440-09018-0; Library ed. ISBN 0-440-09019-9. 138p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.44.

M  
3-4 B.J. is eight, the bane of her nineteen-year-old sister Meg's life in this episodic story. B.J. announces she's invited fifteen children to a party and expects her mother and Meg to furnish food on half an hour's notice; B.J. is convinced she can fly, and damages herself in trying; B.J. raises baby mice, Meg kills them, etc. The only major event in the story is the death of the girls' grandfather, who has lived with them. B.J. is active, her sister is crabby, their mother is understanding, and B.J.'s friend Press is a timid child. That's the extent of the characterization, and there is little substance to the book, which is primarily a collection of episodes, only moderately well written. One odd note: Meg says "I was about your age when our father died." Given Meg's age, that was eleven years earlier; given B.J.'s age, she was born three years after their father died.

Skolsky, Mindy Warshaw. *Hannah Is a Palindrome*; illus. by Karen Ann Weinhaus. Harper, 1980. 79-2009. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-025726-1; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-025727-X. 124p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.79.

R  
3-5 A sequel to *The Whistling Teakettle* and *Carnival and Kopeck* continues the anecdotal story of an affectionate family living in a small town on the banks of the Hudson a half-century ago. Here Hannah discovers what a palindrome is and uses it to put down the class bully, Otto, but most of the book is devoted to the small adventures the family has when they open a restaurant. Daddy can fix anything, and there's plenty to be fixed; Mother frets because there's poison sumac in her hillside garden, and Hannah goes on expeditions alone or with her friends. This has the same warmth and gentle humor as do the earlier books, and although the writing often becomes bland and loses pace, it has the soothing quality of a warm bath.

Spencer, Zane. *Branded Runaway*; by Zane Spencer and Jay Leech. Westminster, 1980. 80-80. ISBN 0-664-32662-5. 89p. \$8.95.

M  
7-9 A rebellious orphan, Reese had hated his foster homes and had run away more than once; picked up by the police, he was sure that Judge Elliott would send him to an institution, but he was given one more chance. For the months remaining before his eighteenth birthday, Reese must serve as counselor in the mountain camp run by John McIntosh, taking troubled urban children for a week of hiking and camping. Everything goes well until the last day; Reese learns to trust John and to dare to hope for a happy future. On the last day, Reese volunteers to look for a missing boy so that the others can start for home; he finds Joby, but they are caught in a snowstorm, hit by an avalanche, and slowed by Joby's broken leg. Eventually they are found, and Reese says, "We beat this mountain. And, if we can do that, we can do anything!" Since two-thirds of the book is devoted to the snowstorm episode, the story of Reese as a runaway seems lost in the adventure that dominates the whole; the characters are superficially drawn, the experiences of Reese as a foster child (and the motivation for his running away) are given cursory treatment so that his bitterness is not explained, and the writing style is pedestrian, particularly in the use of dialogue. What remains is a modicum of action and suspense.

## READING FOR TEACHERS

To order any of the items below, please write directly to the publisher of the item, not to the BULLETIN of the Center for Children's Books.

Bodart, Joni. "Bibliotherapy: The Right Book for the Right Person at the Right Time—and More!" *Top of the News*, Winter, 1980.

Burton, Dwight. "Literature Study Today: An Attempt to Be Objective." *The English Journal*, May, 1980.

Butler, Dorothy. *Cushla and Her Books*. Horn Book, 1980. 128p. \$12.50.

Donelson, Kenneth and Nilsen, Alleen Pace. *Literature for Today's Young Adults*. Scott, Foresman, 1980. 484p. \$10.95.

Gersoni-Edelman, Diane. *Work-Wise: Learning about the World of Work from Books—A Critical Guide to Book Selection and Usage*. ABC-Clio/Neal-Schuman, 1980. 258p. \$16.50.

Hall, Mary Anne. "Language-Centered Reading: Premises and Recommendations." *Language Arts*, September, 1979.

*Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*. "Whitewashing White Racists: Junior Scholastic and the KKK." Council on Interracial Books for Children, V 11, No. 5, 1980.

Ollila, Lloyd O. *Handbook for Administrators and Teachers: Reading in the Kindergarten*. International Reading Association, 1980. 100p. \$3.00 for IRA members, \$4.50 for others. Order from: The Order Department, 800 Barksdale Rd., P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19711. (IRA Book No. 728).

Pikulski, John. "Teaching Reading in the Content Areas." *Teacher*, May/June, 1980.

Schantz, Maria and Brunner, Joseph. *Reading in American Schools: A Guide to Information Sources*. Gale Research, 1980. 266p. \$28.00.

Schreiner, Robert ed. *Reading Tests and Teachers: A Practical Guide*. International Reading Association, 1980. Paper. 81p. \$2.50 for IRA members, \$4.00 for others (IRA Book No. 726).

Schwartz, Sheila. *Teaching Children's Literature: A Humanistic Approach*. Hayden, 1979. 216p. Paper. \$8.60.

Scott, Dorothea Hayward. *Chinese Popular Literature and the Child*. American Library Association, 1980. 192p. \$15.00.

Shawn, Karen. "If Book Reports Turn Them Off . . . Try Book Reacts." *Media & Methods*, January, 1980.

